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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

SP - 175/81
5 August 1981
Copy 2

MEMORANDUM FOR:

FROM: Acting National Intelligence Officer for Strategic Programs
SUBJECT: Reactions to Modernization of US Strategic Forces

1. The outline attached calls for a paper requested by the DCI containing our assessment of foreign, primarily Soviet, reactions to US programs for modernizing its strategic missile and bomber forces. A draft of the paper is needed by COB, Tuesday, 11 August. Despite press speculation, the Department of Defense and the Administration have not made any final decision about US programs. There are certain to be NSC deliberations on the matter and there may be more than one recommendation made to the President for his ultimate decision. It is essential that the DCI be prepared to present to the NSC and the President on objective intelligence assessment relevant to these important decisions. [redacted]

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2. While we have been anticipating this requirement, we expected to be provided by Department of Defense officials the specifics of the US force planning options for use in our assessment. Such access is precluded by the sensitivity of the details of current proposals and the potential for politization of the issues in the public media before a choice has been made. Moreover, the DoD decisions on strategic force modernization are not finalized. On the other hand, we cannot wait until the eve of the first NSC meeting on the matter to produce the intelligence assessment needed by the DCI. The attached outline of the assessment is based on "informed speculation" about the elements of the US programs, but should not be interpreted as corresponding to the recommendations to be made to the President. [redacted]

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3. The DCI has directed that the preparation of the assessment involve as few people as possible. Knowledge of the US program elements used in this assessment would almost certainly be interpreted as indicating the nature of the Administration's decisions. The Directors of OSR, OSWR and OPA have designated individuals from their offices who will take the lead in

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preparing this assessment. These individuals should obtain support from other analysts as required to produce the assessment, minimizing disclosure of the details of the project. The final paper will be drafted in the office of the NIO/SP. The immediate requirement is to produce an NFAC assessment. Time permitting we will obtain comments on the paper from NFIB representatives.

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4. In addition to the proposed outline, attached are copies of the material we have previously submitted to the DCI, D/NFAC and C/NIC on the subject of Soviet reactions to US options for strategic force modernization. Also pertinent but not included are papers prepared by OSWR on possible Soviet reactions to the long endurance aircraft basing proposal for the MX.

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Attachment

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